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PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY
annual assessment report 2010 - 2011



University Studies gathers information on students' learning and experiences in University Studies courses in order to improve our practice and our students' outcomes. **We use surveys, small group discussions, and review of student and course portfolios in our assessment efforts. The tools and methods used to assess student learning are faculty driven and developed.** The information gathered is used by individual faculty, faculty teams, program levels and the program as a whole to gauge program effectiveness and inform program decisions.

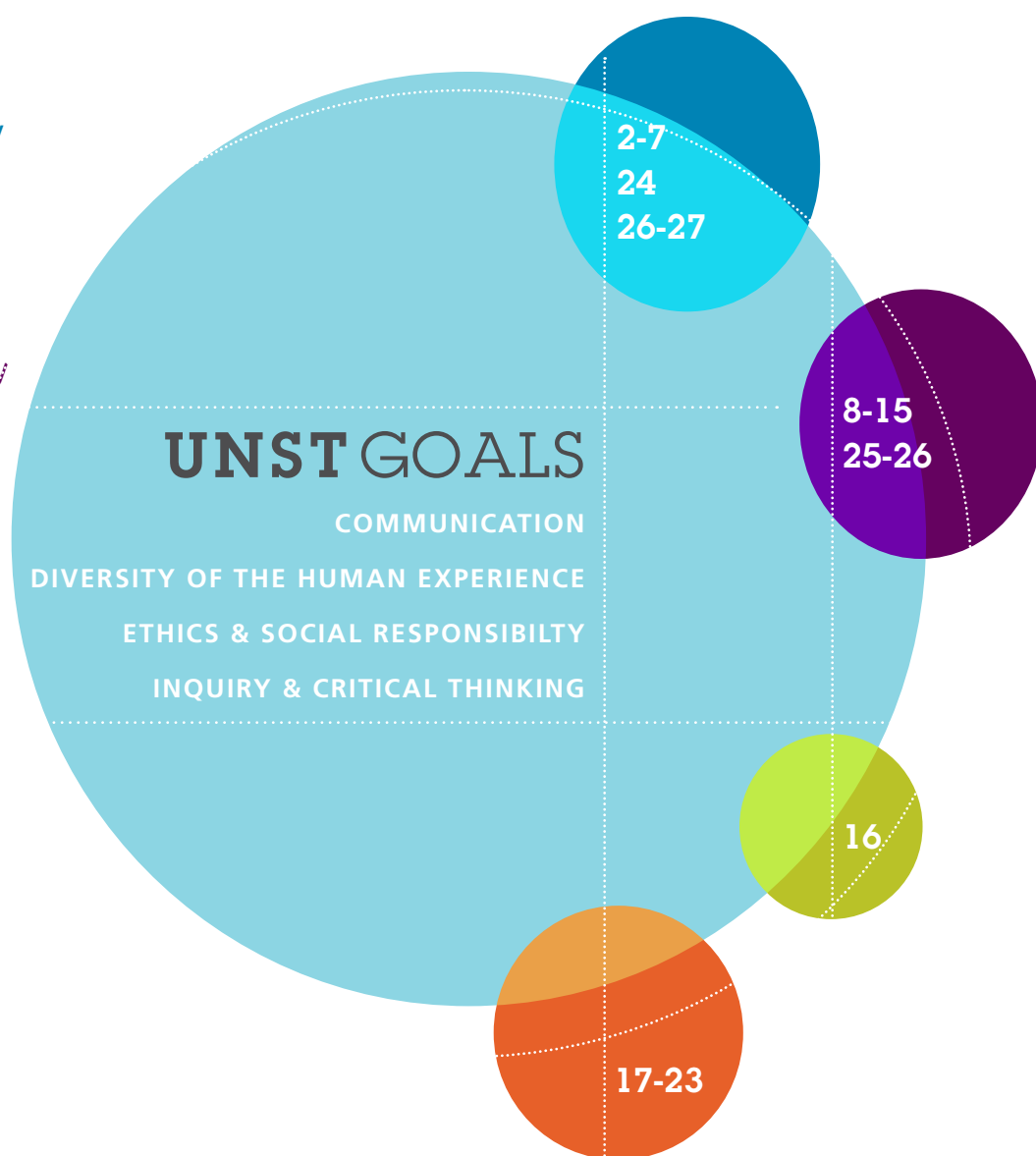
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During the 2010-2011 academic year, the University Studies (UNST) program continued to use existing survey instruments and course evaluations to conduct assessment at the Freshman, Sophomore and Senior levels. Direct assessment of student learning related to University Studies goals included review of student portfolios at the Freshman level, research papers and student portfolios at the Sophomore level and course portfolios at the Capstone level. Qualitative analysis of student comments supplemented the findings from Capstone surveys and Course ePortfolio review.

From student responses to UNST course evaluation surveys it is clear that University Studies goals are being addressed at all levels of the program. All of the surveys asked students whether they had opportunities to engage in learning related to University Studies goals. On all but one item, Freshman Inquiry (FRINQ), Sophomore Inquiry (SINQ) and Capstone students' average agreement rating was 4.0 or higher on a 5-point agreement scale (4 = Agree 5 = Strongly agree), remaining stable or increasing from last year. In FRINQ and Capstones, student ratings remained at a consistently high level. For the 2010-2011 school year, more students in SINQ agreed that they had improved their writing skills, had opportunities to critically analyze course material, and explored ethical issues & dilemmas than in previous years. At the Capstone level, student ratings remained at a consistently high level.

At the FRINQ level, student portfolios were reviewed using the Diversity, Writing, and Quantitative Literacy rubrics. The portfolio review suggests that students' learning in all three areas has improved over the last three reviews (2007, 2009, 2011). In addition to the rubrics, the end of year survey in FRINQ included questions about the portfolio process. Last year, the majority of students reported beginning their portfolio process during fall term, which was an improvement over the previous year. That trend continued this year, with even more students beginning their portfolios in fall term. Students generally agreed that the portfolio process helped them learn about the UNST goals, but were less likely to agree that the process helped them understand connections among topics in the course or better understand themselves as learners.

At the SINQ level, two new Clusters began implementing assessment plans. The Interpreting the Past SINQ/Cluster collected student research papers and reviewed them, learning that students need more support in learning how

to integrate sources in their papers. The Global Perspectives SINQ/Cluster piloted a survey to discover how consistently SINQ courses are covering the Cluster themes. A continuing focus this year has been working toward the revision of the SINQ/Cluster sequence. An emphasis in the 2010-2011 academic year has been to work with other groups to include assessment in their Cluster proposals.

At the Capstone level this year, reviewers assessed Capstone course ePortfolios related to the communication learning goal. This review revealed that the majority of courses provide opportunities for students to meet our learning goals. We also discovered that while aspects of communication are present in all Capstone courses, few students articulated whether or how the course had enhanced their communication skills. Students more readily identified course contributions to their learning about diversity or social responsibility, which were reviewed in previous years.

During the 2010-2011 academic year, the mentor program reviewed student end-of-term evaluations. At the FRINQ level, student responses were consistently positive for all items related to peer mentors' performance. However, there is still room to work on the connection between mentor session and main class. At the SINQ level, students reported higher levels of agreement with all items related to mentor performance when compared with 2009-2010.

Finally, student retention and success during the first year remained a focus for the program and the Retention Associate. A large project for the 2010-2011 year was the implementation of Talisma, an enrollment management and retention software. UNST participation and input were guided by assessment findings collected during the last few years. These findings informed the implementation of a number of CRM functions and will serve as a basis for intervention strategies implemented through CRM. UNST also led the Fall Registration Project, which sought to identify freshmen students who were at risk of not returning for their second year, providing intervention and helping students to stay at PSU and complete their education. The evaluation of that project is ongoing and will continue into 2011-2012. For 2011-2012, UNST has received a grant to support an AmeriCorps retention coordinator who will be working with undergraduate peer mentors in University Studies on strategies to identify students at risk of leaving as well as on interventions to help these students stay in school.

FRESHMAN INQUIRY ASSESSMENT

TOOLS AND METHODS:

Prior Learning Survey

Purpose: The Prior Learning Survey asked about students' academic experiences prior to attending PSU, reasons for and concerns about attending college, and early college experiences and plans. The survey results provide information to individual faculty about their students and to the program about the overall preparation and needs of the incoming freshman class.

Method: During the first two weeks of Fall 2010, Freshman Inquiry students completed a Prior Learning Assessment. This online survey was administered during FRINQ mentor sessions. 1,232 students completed the survey for an 82% response rate.

FRINQ End of Year Survey

Purpose: The FRINQ End-of-Year Survey asked students to rate their experiences in their FRINQ course over the 2010-2011 academic year. Students responded to questions about the course format, faculty pedagogical practices, and mentor contribution to the course. The survey also asked about experiences with advising, comfort on campus, and plans for the Fall Term. The results provide information to individual faculty about their course and to the program about students' overall experience in FRINQ. Students were also asked about their experiences assembling and constructing their ePortfolio.

Method: During the final three weeks of Spring term 2011, FRINQ students completed the End-of-Year Survey. This online survey was administered during mentor sessions. 924 students responded to the survey for a response rate of 70%.

FRINQ Portfolio Review

Purpose: The FRINQ Portfolio Review process scores student portfolios against rubrics developed to measure student learning related to University Studies goals. The results provide information to faculty teams about student learning in FRINQ themes and to the program about students' overall learning in FRINQ.

Method: During their year-long FRINQ courses, students develop electronic portfolios representing their work and reflection relating to the four University Studies goals. For each goal, students provide two forms of evidence showing their learning related to the goal. For examples of student ePortfolios see:

sites.google.com/a/pdx.edu/eportresources/Home/ePortfolio-Showcase.

During Spring 2011, students were asked for permission to evaluate their portfolios as part of program assessment for University Studies. 760 (67.7%) students returned consent forms and 528 (69%) of those returning forms gave consent. Of these, 197 student portfolios were randomly selected for review. When electronic portfolios with bad URLs were excluded, we ended up reviewing 191 portfolios. This year, the portfolio review process focused on the Communication (Writing and Quantitative Literacy) and Diversity goals. Each goal was assessed using a 6-point rubric, where 6 is a score expected of a graduating senior. Rubrics are available at www.pdx.edu/unst/university-studies-goals. The Diversity rubric is included in Appendix B.

Portfolio review takes place in June, after Spring grades have been posted. Forty portfolio reviewers, representing faculty and graduate students from a broad array of departments across Portland State University, spend one day per goal assessing student portfolios. The morning of each day is spent orienting reviewers to the rubric, assessing practice portfolios, and calibrating reviewers so that they are reviewing portfolios similarly. After reviewers are calibrated, each portfolio is reviewed by two reviewers. When reviewers' scores are the same or one point apart, the portfolio receives a score that is the average of the two ratings. If the reviewers' scores differ by more than 1 point, a third reviewer looks at the portfolio and scores it. If the third score differs from the first two, a conference is called among the reviewers to determine a final score. Inter-rater reliability for the rubrics was: Writing, 86%; Diversity, 72%; and Quantitative Literacy, 83%. In addition to using the rubrics, each portfolio was assessed against a checklist developed to provide information about the types of assignments included in student portfolios.

FRESHMAN INQUIRY ASSESSMENT

DATA & FINDINGS: FRINQ END OF YEAR SURVEY

KEY

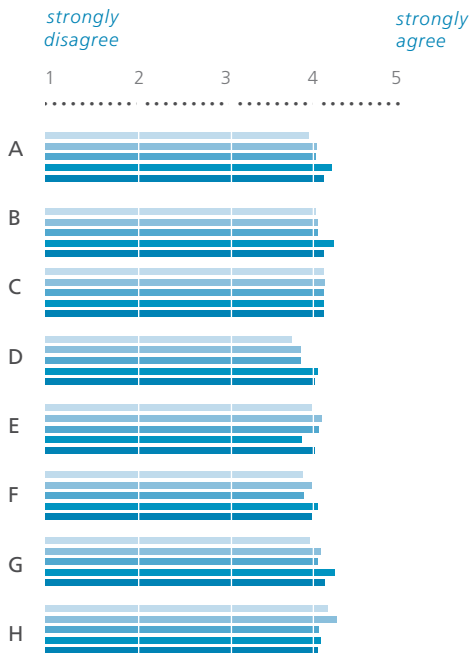
- A** Apply course material to improve critical thinking
- B** Acquire skills in working with others as a member of a team
- C** Explore issues of diversity such as race; class; gender; sexual orientation; ethnicity
- D** Develop skills in expressing myself orally.

- E** Develop skills in expressing myself in writing
- F** Learn how to find and use resources for answering or solving problems
- G** Learn to analyze and critically evaluate ideas; arguments and multiple points of view
- H** Explore ethical issues

YEARS '06-07 '07-08 '08-09 '09-10 '10-11

MA = MODERATE AGREEMENT HA = HIGH AGREEMENT

The mean responses for FRINQ course end-of-year surveys.



The moderate & high agreement means for FRINQ course end-of-year surveys.

	MA * HA		MA * HA		MA * HA		MA * HA		MA * HA	
A	26.5	70.6	23.3	74.4	18.9	78.4	6.1	91.8	23.3	76.7
B	35.3	61.8	25.6	69.8	24.3	75.7	16.3	87.8	23.3	72.1
C	14.7	79.4	25.6	69.8	29.7	67.6	22.4	73.5	23.3	69.8
D	55.9	29.4	34.9	51.2	48.6	48.6	38.8	63.3	37.2	58.1
E	47.1	52.9	23.3	72.1	21.6	75.7	10.2	89.8	20.9	76.7
F	35.3	61.8	25.6	69.8	24.3	75.7	16.3	87.8	23.3	72.1
G	35.3	61.8	25.6	69.8	24.3	75.7	16.3	87.8	23.3	72.1
H	35.3	61.8	25.6	69.8	24.3	75.7	16.3	87.8	23.3	72.1

*In courses with high agreement 75-100% of students agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. Moderate agreement represents 50-74% of students and low agreement indicates that less than half of students agreed with the statement.

FRESHMAN INQUIRY ASSESSMENT

DATA & FINDINGS: FRINQ END-OF -YEAR SURVEY

KEY

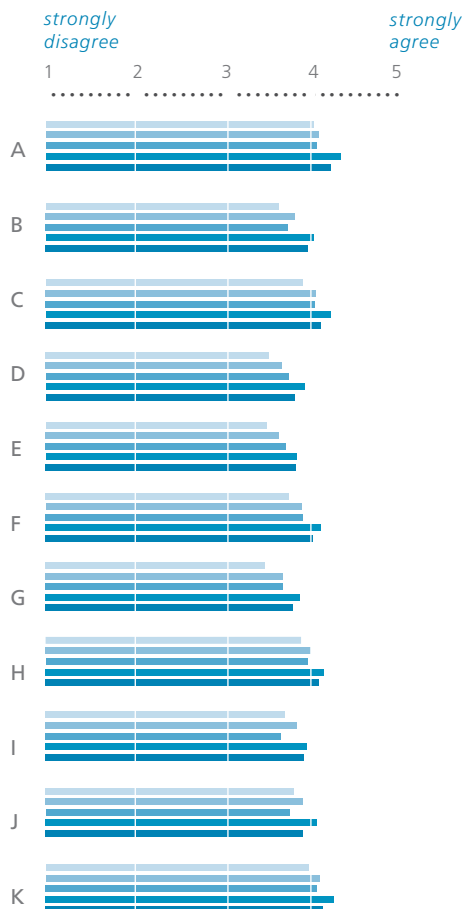
- A Displayed a personal interest in students and their learning
- B Scheduled course work in ways which encouraged students to stay up to date in their work
- C Formed "teams" or "discussion groups" to facilitate learning
- D Made it clear how each topic fit into the course
- E Explained course material clearly and concisely
- F Related course material to real life situations

- G Inspired students to set and achieve goals which really challenged them
- H Asked students to share ideas and experiences with others whose backgrounds and viewpoints differ from their own
- I Provided timely & frequent feedback on tests, reports, etc. to help students improve
- J Encouraged student-faculty interaction outside of class
- K Used a variety of methods;papers, presentations, class projects, exams, etc to evaluate student progress

YEARS '06-07 '07-08 '08-09 '09-10 '10-11

MA = MODERATE AGREEMENT HA = HIGH AGREEMENT

The mean responses for FRINQ FACULTY course End-of-Year Surveys.



The moderate & high agreement means for FRINQ FACULTY course End-of-Year Surveys.

	MA * HA		MA * HA		MA * HA		MA * HA		MA * HA	
A	29.4	61.8	23.3	69.8	27.0	67.6	12.2	87.8	18.6	79.1
B	32.4	38.2	32.6	48.8	56.8	35.1	18.4	81.6	25.6	72.1
C	23.5	61.8	30.2	62.8	29.7	67.6	22.4	73.5	23.3	69.8
D	33.3	36.4	39.5	46.5	51.4	35.1	49.0	42.9	39.5	44.2
E	33.3	36.4	44.2	37.2	51.4	35.1	38.8	51.0	25.6	48.8
F	24.2	51.5	37.2	55.8	43.2	45.9	30.6	71.4	44.2	51.2
G	30.3	27.3	39.5	34.9	32.4	40.5	42.9	46.9	46.5	34.9
H	27.3	57.6	34.9	55.8	18.9	75.7	16.3	81.6	34.9	65.1
I	36.4	42.4	44.2	44.2	27.0	59.5	28.6	61.2	34.9	53.5
J	48.5	39.4	34.9	44.2	32.4	54.1	24.5	73.5	25.6	58.1
K	39.4	57.6	23.3	69.8	16.2	81.1	10.2	89.8	20.9	76.7

*In courses with high agreement 75-100% of students agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. Moderate agreement represents 50-74% of students and low agreement indicates that less than half of students agreed with the statement.

FRESHMAN INQUIRY ASSESSMENT

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Course Experience

In general, students agreed that they had the opportunities to address all four of the University Studies goals in their FRINQ courses. Means on these items ranged from 3.98 to 4.16 on a 5-point agreement scale. For all items, mean scores are relatively stable from the '09-10 to the '10-11 school year. Students also generally agreed with statements about their faculty members' teaching practices. All items had means above 3.0 on a 5-point scale.

Another way to look at course evaluation data is to look at the percentage of courses where there were high levels of agreement among students regarding UNST goals and faculty teaching practices. For 81% of UNST courses, there was high agreement among students that they had opportunities to analyze and critically evaluate ideas. However, there were fewer courses where students agreed that their faculty explained material clearly and concisely or made clear how the topics fit into the course.

Student Portfolios

Related to student portfolios, most students reported beginning to work on portfolios during Fall Term (64%), with 24% beginning the process in the winter, and 11% beginning the process during Spring Term. This continues a trend from last year with increasing numbers of faculty beginning the ePortfolio process during fall term.

When asked whether their faculty member graded their portfolios each term most students reported that their portfolios were graded during Spring (73.3%), but over half were graded during Winter (64.5%) & Fall (53.3%).

When asked about how strongly they agreed with statements about the portfolio process, students reported the strongest agreement with the statement that "creating my portfolio helped me understand the University Studies goals" (52.8%). Students were less likely to agree or strongly agree that creating the portfolio had helped them "understand connections among topics in the course" (36.4%) or "understand themselves as learners" (32.3%).

DATA AND FINDINGS - FRINQ PORTFOLIO REVIEW

KEY

A Diversity

B *Quantitative Literacy

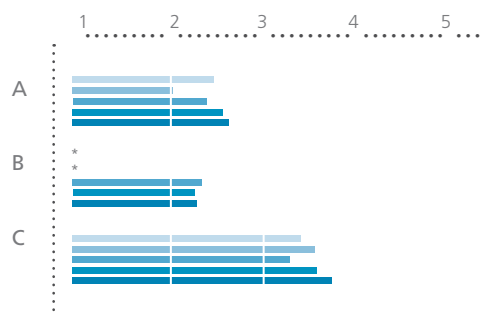
C Writing

* Comparison with previous years are not appropriate because the QL rubric was adjusted during 2007. The changes contribute to a more comprehensive rubric, but they do not allow for comparison across years.

YEARS '02-03 '04-05 '06-07 '08-09 '10-11

UNIVERSITY STUDIES GOALS

UNIVERSITY STUDIES GOALS Mean portfolio scores



ASSESSMENT DATA & FINDINGS

FRINQ PORTFOLIO REVIEW

KEY

A EVIDENCE RELATED TO DIVERSITY

C EVIDENCE RELATED TO WRITING

B EVIDENCE RELATED TO QUANTITATIVE LITERACY

YEARS '06-07 '08-09 '10-11

N = NUMBER OF PORTFOLIOS

Percentage of portfolios that included:

	N	%	N	%	N	%
A						
Personal definition of diversity	109	53.7	94	47	98	49.2
Reference to multiple facets of diversity	115	56.7	122	61	94	49.2
Personal narrative related to diversity	107	52.7	109	54.7	65	34.0
Reflection related to diversity	133	65.5	145	72.5	113	59.2
Outside scholarship related to diversity	109	53.7	107	53.5	59	30.1
B						
Data represented in charts and graphs	142	70.0	72	36	82	42.9
Narrative describing quantitative data	121	59.6	126	63	109	57.1
Evaluation of quantitative data	46	22.7	37	18.5	35	18.3
Academic essay included in this section	/	/	/	/	78	40.8
PowerPoint presentation	/	/	/	/	35	18.3
Statistical analysis	/	/	/	/	40	20.9
C						
Personal narrative	177	87.2	155	77.5	136	71.2
Analytical writing	179	88.2	157	78.5	138	72.3
Creative writing	62	30.5	60	30	49	25.6
Reflection on the writing process	120	59.1	104	52	91	47.6
Assignment instructions	39	19.2	86	43	84	44.0
Outside references integrated into writing	155	76.4	118	59	101	52.9
Evidence of a first draft	17	8.4	54	27	45	23.5
In-text citations	89	43.8	52	26	56	29.3
Appropriate use of grammar throughout	153	75.4	135	67.5	128	67.0

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Rubric

The mean writing score has increased over the last two reviews and this year is the highest ever (3.74). The mean quantitative literacy score has also increased between 2009 and 2011 after having dropped between 2007 and 2009.

Checklist

In 2007, students generally did not include evidence of a first draft of their writing (8.4%), or assignment instructions (19.2%) because those were not required elements of student portfolios. Since changing the portfolio requirements, many more students are now including first drafts (23.0%) and assignment instructions (44%), but after increasing two years ago, there was no additional increase this year.

The quantitative literacy evidence students included most frequently were narrative descriptions of quantitative data (57%). Students also included charts and graphs (43%) and academic essays (41%). Fewer students included actual evidence of statistical analyses or evaluation of quantitative data.

In the Diversity sections of their portfolios the number of students who included personal definitions of diversity remained stable from 2007 through 2011. Across all other types of evidence, the number of portfolios including the evidence dropped between 2009 and 2011.

REFLECTION

It is reassuring to see the slow but steady improvement in Freshman Inquiry students' writing, quantitative literacy and attention to matters of diversity as evidenced in 2010-2011 e-portfolio review data. Although it is not possible to determine all the elements contributing to this incremental improvement, it is worth noting that over the past three years the year-to-year turnover of FRINQ faculty has lessened. In the summer of 2009 about a dozen faculty who were new to FRINQ participated in the summer workshop designed for them (this number represents about 30% of the FRINQ faculty in any year). In the summer of 2010 the number was seven; in 2011, only four. Such stability promises to enhance the sustainable effects of future faculty development projects tied to FRINQ.

An ongoing challenge is the collection and provision of resources available for common use (classroom exercises, particularly useful articles, ideas for development of student e-portfolios and the like). A web-based resource repository structure has been developed for use by UNST mentors and adopted by Capstone faculty. This structure is likely to be developed for use by FRINQ faculty as well.

SOPHOMORE INQUIRY ASSESSMENT

TOOLS AND METHODS:

SINQ END-OF-TERM Survey

Purpose: The SINQ End-of-term Survey asked students to rate their experiences in their SINQ course. Students responded to questions about the course format, faculty pedagogical practices, and mentor contribution to the course. The results provide information to individual faculty about their course and to the program about students' overall experience in SINQ.

Method: During the final three weeks of each term during the 2010-2011 academic year, SINQ students completed the End-of-term survey. This on-line survey was administered during mentor sessions. 3542 students responded to the survey.

An extensive review of both SINQ and Jr.-level courses in each Cluster is underway with faculty workgroups actively engaged in improving the coherence of SINQ and Cluster learning objectives. Each Cluster is to develop an assessment plan which will be coordinated with the UNST Assessment Coordinator and SINQ/Cluster Coordinator. These cluster-specific assessments will provide rich opportunities to assess and improve the quality of each Cluster. Examples of two SINQ/Cluster specific assessments efforts follow.

Interpreting the Past Research Paper Assessment

Purpose: In 2010-11, the first year of the cluster, we focused on attaining greater cohesion within the new cluster's Sophomore Inquiry classes. All SINQ instructors were invited to join a working group to develop a strategy for teaching research-based writing, and this group reached a consensus on a shared research paper assignment. All SINQs will now incorporate the following elements into their research papers:

1. Initial steps: how to explore a topic in a preliminary way
2. Library resources: how to identify appropriate books and journal articles; how to evaluate the credibility of sources
3. Draft and revision
4. Final paper: 5-7 pages in length

The Interpreting the Past (ItP) SINQ chose to assess student writing during the 2010-2011 school year. Our purpose in this assessment was to look at a cross-section of student work for a specific assignment—a research paper—in order to determine the degree to which students were able to meet the objectives of a specific type of assignment. We wanted to assess students' strengths and weaknesses and identify areas where instructors and mentors might concentrate their efforts in terms of writing pedagogy. Furthermore, the analytic rubric allows us to identify instructors who had a particular strength in one area, or who had particularly strong papers

overall. Using this information, we can help us gather best practices for writing assignments and writing pedagogy.

about their course and to the program about students' overall experience in FRINQ. Students were also asked about their experiences assembling and constructing their ePortfolio.

Method: Interpreting the Past Instructors teaching in the winter and spring terms of 2011 were invited to submit copies of their students' research papers. Research papers were five to seven pages and required that students apply both primary and/or scholarly sources. Some instructors also supplied the assignment for the research paper.

To assess the research papers, The ItP SINQ/Cluster coordinator worked with the UNST Writing Coordinator to develop an analytic rubric representing the expectations for student writing in the ItP SINQ. The language and design of the rubric were based on objectives articulated in the guidelines for the Interpreting the Past SINQ and conversations between the Writing Coordinator and the Cluster Coordinator, as well as objectives articulated in several of the assignments for the research paper provided by instructors. The rubric included 5 elements (Thesis and Development of Ideas, Research, Integration of Source material, Organization and Structure, and Control of Syntax, Vocabulary and Mechanics), with each element represented by 4 levels of achievement. During Winter and Spring terms, student papers were collected from 7 ItP courses. A total of 68 student papers were reviewed during UNSTs annual portfolio review day. Each student paper was reviewed by 2 reviewers and given a score (1 through 4) on each of 5 writing elements.

Global Perspectives Syllabus Analysis and SINQ Pilot Survey

Purpose: In addition to a number of conversations that took place during the 2010-2011 academic year regarding the Global Perspectives SINQ/Cluster, the group decided to develop questions to add to the end of term SINQ course evaluation that would assess how well the course covered themes that are central to the learning expectations in the SINQ course. The initial questions were designed to address the course content, the students' reasons for taking the course, and the students' plans to pursue academic activities related to the Global Perspectives SINQ course. A syllabus review was also conducted to identify common elements across Global Perspectives SINQ courses.

Method: During summer 2011, one section of Global Perspectives SINQ was offered. The students enrolled in that course were asked a series of questions related to the goals of the SINQ as a part of their end-of-term course evaluation. Twenty-six students completed the on-line end-of-term survey. Syllabi from 11 instructors representing all five regions were reviewed.

SOPHOMORE INQUIRY ASSESSMENT

DATA & FINDINGS: SINQ END-OF-YEAR SURVEY

KEY

- A** The course provided opportunities to learn to analyze & critically evaluate ideas, arguments and multiple points of view
- B** The course provided opportunities to develop skills in working with others as a member of a team
- C** The course provided opportunities to explore issues of diversity such as race; class; gender; sexual orientation; ethnicity
- D** The course provided opportunities to develop skills in expressing myself orally

- E** The course provided opportunities to develop skills in expressing myself in writing
- F** The course provided opportunities to explore ethical issues and dilemmas
- G** It was clear how the work from the mentor session connected to the overall course
- H** I understand how this course fits into my PSU general education requirements
- I** Overall, I was satisfied with my experience in this class

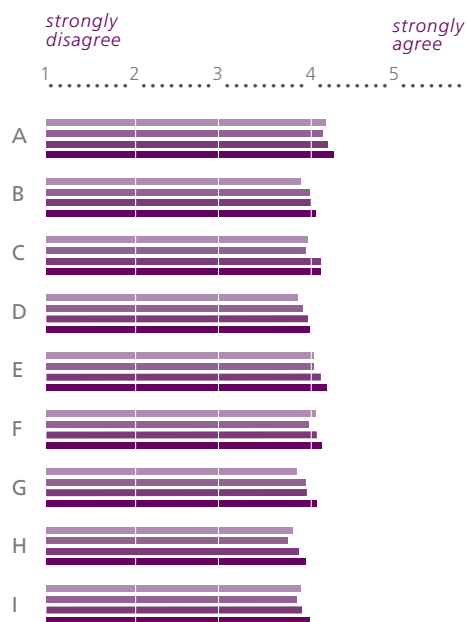
YEARS

'07-08 '08-09 '09-10 '10-11

MA = MODERATE AGREEMENT

HA = HIGH AGREEMENT

The mean responses for SINQ STUDENTS course End-of-Year Surveys.



The moderate & high agreement means for SINQ STUDENTS course End-of-Year Surveys.

	'07-08		'08-09		'09-10		'10-11	
	MA	HA	MA	HA	MA	HA	MA	HA
A	16.2	77.7	21.8	74.4	15.4	81.1	16.8	81.8
B	17.7	59.2	20.3	70.7	31.5	62.2	20.3	67.8
C	22.3	55.4	28.6	57.1	23.8	65.0	28.7	61.5
D	38.5	43.1	36.8	50.4	39.2	54.5	25.9	62.9
E	32.3	63.1	30.8	66.2	23.8	72.7	23.8	74.8
F	26.2	64.6	35.3	57.9	23.8	66.4	28.7	67.8
G	36.2	45.4	39.8	54.1	36.4	55.2	26.6	67.8
H	51.5	36.9	48.1	40.6	41.3	49.7	46.2	47.6
I	36.2	50	33.1	49.6	32.2	55.2	34.3	57.3

*In courses with high agreement 75-100% of students agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. Moderate agreement represents 50-74% of students and low agreement indicates that less than half of students agreed with the statement.

SOPHOMORE INQUIRY ASSESSMENT

DATA & FINDINGS: SINQ END-OF-YEAR SURVEY

KEY

- A Displayed a personal interest in students and their learning
- B Scheduled course work (class activities; tests; projects) in ways which encouraged students to stay up to date in their work
- C Provided timely and frequent feedback on test; reports; projects; etc. to help students improve
- D Used a variety of methods-papers; presentations; class projects; exams; etc.- to evaluate student progress

- E Clearly stated the learning objectives for the overall course
- F Clearly stated the criteria for grading
- G Created an atmosphere that encouraged active student participation
- H Used activities and assignments that allowed me to feel personally engaged in my learning

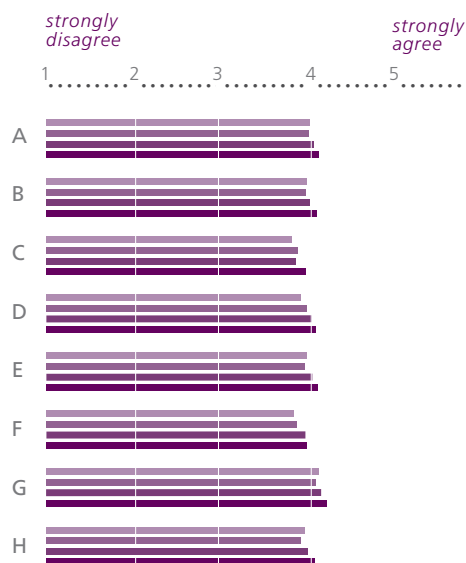
YEARS

'07-08 '08-09 '09-10 '10-11

MA = MODERATE AGREEMENT

HA = HIGH AGREEMENT

The mean responses for SINQ STUDENTS course End-of-Year Surveys.



The moderate & high agreement means for SINQ FACULTY course End-of-Year Surveys.

	MA * HA		MA * HA		MA * HA		MA * HA	
A	33.1	58.5	29.3	61.7	29.4	64.3	27.3	68.5
B	38.5	53.1	28.6	61.7	28.7	61.5	21.7	72.7
C	32.3	46.9	38.3	51.1	30.8	51.0	23.9	55.9
D	32.3	53.1	34.6	58.6	33.6	62.9	33.6	61.5
E	33.8	55.4	29.3	58.6	29.4	62.9	23.8	68.5
F	36.9	43.1	30.8	54.1	34.3	57.3	40.6	51.7
G	24.6	64.6	24.8	67.7	25.2	69.2	21.7	74.1
H	36.9	51.5	36.8	50.4	33.6	57.3	37.8	57.3

SOPHOMORE INQUIRY ASSESSMENT

DATA & FINDINGS: SINQ END-OF-YEAR SURVEY

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

In general, students agreed that they had the opportunity to address all four of the University Studies goals in their SINQ courses. Means on these items ranged from 4.05 – 4.22 on a 5-point agreement scale. Compared to '09-'10, SINQ students in '10-'11 had higher mean ratings on items related to critical thinking, writing, and ethics and social responsibility. In '10-'11, students also had higher mean ratings on items related to increasing skills with team work, clear connections between mentor and main sessions, and overall satisfaction. When looking at the proportion of courses where students showed consistent agreement with 'goal' items, there was no appreciable change between '09-'10 and '10-'11.

Students also generally agreed with statements about their faculty members' teaching practices. All items had means above 3.93 on a 5-point scale. Students were most likely to agree that faculty created an atmosphere that encouraged active participation (M = 4.17). Mean scores for teaching items increased across all items except two. Both of those items related to rating student performance. When looking at the proportion of courses where students show consistent agreement with teaching-related items, there was an increase in the number of courses where most students agreed that the faculty scheduled work in ways that encouraged students to stay up to date, clearly stated the overall learning objectives for the course, and created an atmosphere that encouraged active participation. The proportion of courses where students agreed that the criteria for grading were clear decreased between '09-'10 and '10-'11.'

SOPHOMORE INQUIRY ASSESSMENT

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES SYLLABUS ANALYSIS AND SINQ PILOT SURVEY DATA

SINQ

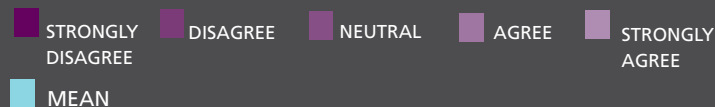
Students taking the Summer course were using it to fulfill:

UNIVERSITY STUDIES REQUIREMENT - 23 PEOPLE // BLACK STUDIES REQUIREMENT - 0 PEOPLE // INTERNATIONAL STUDIES REQUIREMENT - 3 PEOPLE

Please tell us how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about this course:

This course has enhanced my understanding of:

KEY



4.19	1	0	2	13	10	GLOBALIZATION
4.08	1	0	2	15	7	DEVELOPMENT
4.24	0	0	5	9	12	TRADITION & MODERNITY
4.58	0	0	2	7	17	NATIONALISM / THE NATION-STATE
4.36	0	0	4	8	13	COLONIALISM & IMPERIALISM
4.5	0	0	3	7	16	HISTORY AS IT SHAPES THE PRESENT

Q & A

+ Do you plan on taking any upper division courses related to this cluster or region? **YES - 15 NO - 11**

+ Do you plan to study abroad while at Portland State? **YES - 8 NO - 18**

+ Are you currently taking or do you plan on to take language courses other than English? **YES - 16 NO - 9**

(1 speaks another language & 2 have taken two years of language)

Students reported planning to study French (7), Japanese, Italian (2), Russian, Swahili, German, Norwegian, Danish, Latin and Ancient Greek.

SYLLABUS ANALYSIS

Based on a content analysis of course syllabi (from 11 instructors, all 5 regions), current classes focus on a few common elements. These include the use of:

1. Indigenous literature, other texts and/or film to explore regional cultural and/or political identities.
2. Common writing assignment (Elements) with relevant regional topical focus.
 - Thesis and Development of Ideas*
 - Research and the Finding of Source Materials*
 - Integration of Source Material to Support Claims*
 - Organization and Structure of Paper*
 - Vocabulary, Mechanics and Editorial Techniques*
3. Map exercise
4. Connections made to external (non-class-based) international events. This includes encouraging students to attend talks and films, and to work with the many internationally-oriented organizations in Portland.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Survey

A large majority of students were enrolled in the SINQ to fulfill UNST requirements.

There was consistent agreement among students that the SINQ addressed all of the learning themes for the course. Students expressed the highest levels of agreement that the course enhanced their learning about nations and the nation state and history as it shapes the present.

Most students are planning to take upper division courses related to the cluster or region and are planning to take language courses. Less than one-third of the students reported planning to study abroad.

Syllabus Analysis

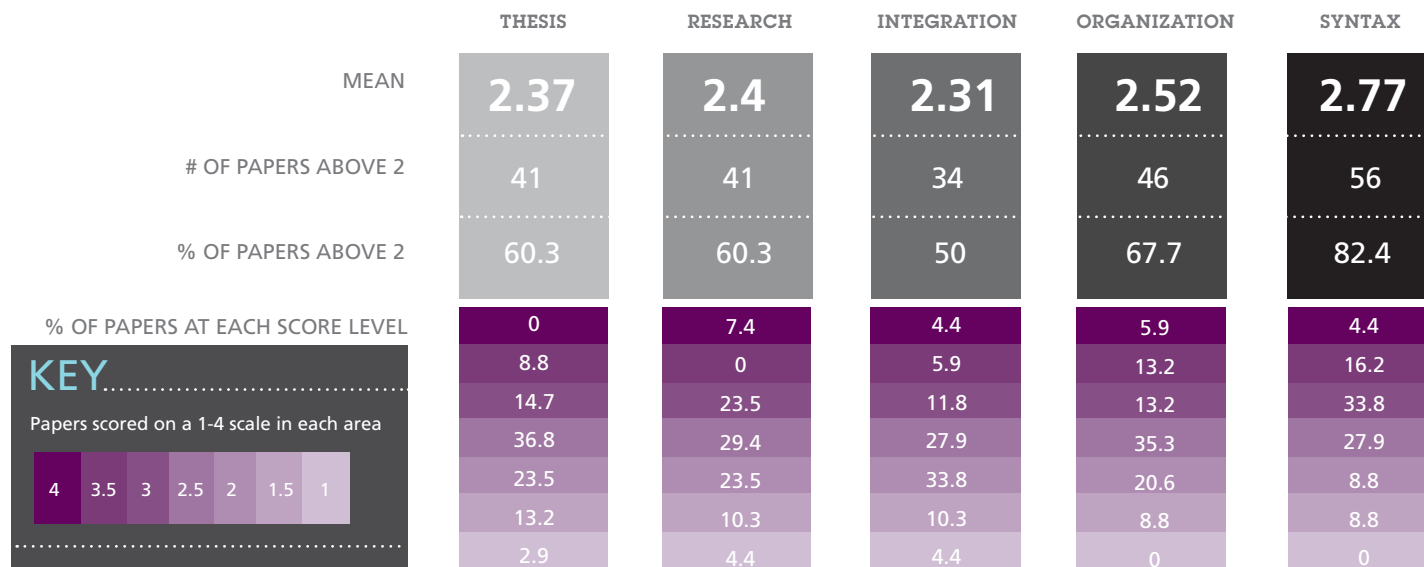
The majority of the teachers treat the course as an "Introduction to the region,"—focusing on the concepts related specifically to the region at hand. There is little common content between the regional variants – beyond the fact all are teaching about regions. While on the surface all follow the general learning outcomes/focus (see above), students could easily take the 5 different INTL 233 SINQs without any overlap. In this sense, the former regional approach lives on.

SOPHOMORE INQUIRY ASSESSMENT

INTERPRETING THE PAST RESEARCH PAPER ASSESSMENT

NUMBER OF PORTFOLIOS SURVEYED = 68

Papers scored on a 1-4 scale in each area



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Overall, the categories with the highest mean scores were Organization (2.52) and Syntax (2.77). 82% of student papers were scored above a 2 (on a 4-point scale) for Syntax and 68% were scored above a 2 on Organization. The mean student score for Integration was the lowest of the 5 categories (2.31). Only half of the student papers were scored above 2 in the Integration category.

SINQ End-of-Term Survey

Student ratings of the learning experience in Sophomore Inquiry show an increase from previous years in the areas of critical thinking, working with others as a team, writing, and exploring ethical issues. Student feedback on the connection of mentor sessions to main session also has shown improvement. Continued improvement in these areas may be a result of the feedback loop from the assessment team to faculty.

Student ratings of faculty also showed a significant increase from the previous year in the areas of showing a personal interest, scheduling work and assignments, using a variety of methods to evaluate progress, clearly stating learning objectives, and creating an atmosphere to encourage students to engage and participate. Ratings of faculty will continue to be used to provide developmental feedback to faculty, particularly those hired specifically to teach in UNST courses. Course evaluations are also included by faculty in their portfolio reviews for annual review or tenure.

While assessment scores are high overall, variation in the scores do provide a focus for continued faculty and course development in the next year. Notable in this regard is the lack of demonstrable improvement in SINQ courses providing opportunities to explore issues of diversity. This represents an opportunity for both general faculty development and specific assessment of how diversity is included in each Cluster.

An extensive review of both SINQ and Jr-level courses in each Cluster is underway with faculty workgroups actively engaged in improving the coherence of SINQ and Cluster learning objectives. As the review is sequential and is leading to a reduced number of Clusters over several years, it may be useful to include analysis of the data by Cluster to compare and contrast areas of strengths and needed improvements by Cluster. Each Cluster is to develop an assessment plan which will be coordinated with the UNST Assessment Coordinator and SINQ/Cluster Coordinator. These cluster-specific assessments will provide rich opportunities to assess and improve the quality of each Cluster.

Interpreting the Past Research Paper Assessment

This assessment process has proved useful in a number of ways, and it has provided information about both writing instruction and the assessment process itself. Through looking at student work developed in response to similar (though not identical) assignments, we were able to identify areas where SINQ students might experience particular difficulty in writing a college-level research paper. Based on the scores, students struggled most with the following elements of writing: developing a thesis throughout the paper; working with and researching appropriate sources; and integrating sources into their papers. In regard to thesis development, the scorers that participated in the assessment identified several cases where a student had a clear thesis statement, but did not go on to develop a coherent analysis throughout. In other words, several students focused on the statement

itself, but they did not develop a strong, consistent relationship between their thesis statement and ideas throughout the paper. The scorers also identified cases where there was strong, in-depth analysis in the paper, but the student did not pull their ideas together to form a coherent thesis statement or analysis.

Identifying these areas provides a platform to begin to recognize strategies and best practices for addressing the areas where students might need further instruction and clarification. For example, if papers demonstrate that a number of students lacked appropriate and credible sources, how might we begin to guide students towards stronger assessment of their own sources and increase their understanding of the purpose of academic research in this context? Furthermore, if one instructor's students had particularly high scores in one area relative to other classes, this assessment allows us to explore course activities that may have helped students develop this ability.

Writing rubric

Much of the conversation that followed the scoring focused on the rubric itself and the particulars of the language in the rubric. Overall, reaction to the rubric was positive, especially given that this is the first time we have used it, and scorers enjoyed the opportunity to look closely at one piece of student work. Though most members of the group indicated that they found the rubric helpful and easy to use—and the general level of agreement among scores indicates that scorers were able to apply the rubric after group calibration—scorers did find some of the terms used in the rubric confusing or inconsistent. For example, some scorers found the interchangeable use of the terms “some” and “minimal” to be inaccurate, since “some” generally implies more than “minimal.” Some scorers also indicated that on some papers they had difficulty providing scores for “Organization and Structure” since they came across papers where a student's paragraphs were well organized, but the paper lacked coherence overall. In terms of writing instruction, this indicates that, in some cases, students may be able to develop focused paragraphs, but they may need more guidance when developing coherence in longer papers that call for a sustained development of an idea.

Scorers also debated some of the descriptions of specific elements in the rubric. Some questioned whether or not students' ability to recognize various interpretations of an issue or topic was better aligned with integration of source materials rather than thesis development. Also, some scorers indicated that they had some difficulty differentiating between research and integration of sources.

There was also discussion surrounding differences in expectations for writing and research in different disciplines. For example, one scorer indicated that the rubric might provide a clearer definition of what a thesis means in this context, given that the definition of a thesis varies. Since SINQs are interdisciplinary courses that introduce students to a variety of conventions and approaches across disciplines, this scorers' observation indicates that instructors and students could benefit from either a definition or clear examples of expectations within the disciplines they draw from.

Assessment Process

Our experience allowed us to garner some insight that might be helpful for future assessment projects of this kind. For this project, we only had access to some of the research paper assignments students received and, therefore, did not provide scorers with the assignments. Though we did not want scorers to assess the work relative to what students were asked to do, the written assignments could have provided important context that may have helped scorers better understand the student work.

In the future, it would also be beneficial to have instructors that teach the particular SINQ participate in both the development of the rubric and the scoring itself. Given the timing of the assessment, we were unable to plan sufficiently for optimal participation and collaboration. However, as other SINQs revisit their course objectives, they should consider these issues as they develop their rubrics and their assessment plan.

Interpreting the Past Plans for 2011-12

Fall 2011 will see the initial implementation of the shared research paper components, and we will track this process through continuing to assess the Communication goal for this academic year. At the initial faculty meeting for Interpreting the Past SINQ instructors, we will have a presentation by the UNST Writing Coordinator, Anne Knepler, on tactics for teaching integration (the lowest scoring aspect in the spring 2011 assessment). Based on this next round of assessment, we will fine-tune the shared research paper then for 2012-13.

We are also going to begin an annual on-line journal highlighting the student research writing from the SINQs, which will in turn then offer students a ready collection of varied exemplars for use in subsequent years. The other way that we will enhance resources for teaching research, writing and critical thinking skills is by developing with Anne Knepler an online suite of resources specific to our SINQ research paper.

Global Perspectives Syllabus Analysis and SINQ Pilot Survey

During the 2010-2011 academic year, we piloted a number of assessment efforts related to the Global Perspectives SINQs, including an evaluation of a Summer quarter SINQ (Introduction to Europe.). Originally we planned to include a second SINQ (Introduction to Latin America) but that course was cancelled. In absence of more data, we will wait until the end of Fall 2011 to make more comments. We will continue surveying throughout 2011-12 (for questions/comments, see below). Additional questions may be added after fall quarter. In addition, we collected and analyzed syllabi from the 5 regional courses (11 syllabi, see above for details). Further assessment efforts included adding language surrounding learning objectives and meeting with all new instructors of global perspectives SINQ.

Global Perspectives plans for 2011-12

Initial 2011-12 assessment efforts for the cluster will include:

1. Evaluation Questions end of quarter as part of UNST evaluations
2. Map Exercise in all SINQs
3. Continued Collection of Syllabi on annual basis and review periodically
4. Language included regarding the overarching global perspectives focus into SINQ syllabi
5. Interviews with selected instructors on content-related issues to determine effective assessment measures for the future

ASSESSMENT DATA & FINDINGS

UPPER-DIVISION (Junior) CLUSTER ASSESSMENT

REFLECTION

As a result of both course assessment data and administrative review of capacity of each cluster over several years, a Cluster Redesign process was initiated by the University Studies Council, supported by UNST faculty and staff. The purpose of the redesign is to review each Cluster of SING and Jr. Cluster courses to assure coherence of the theme and assure capacity for students to complete their general education requirements.

Faculty workgroups have proposed and implemented two new Clusters in the past academic year. Global Perspectives includes courses from 27 departments and Interpreting the Past was developed to incorporate courses from 21 departments into a coherent offering of Sophomore and upper division Cluster courses. Through this ongoing review, existing Clusters were strengthened through consolidation of courses in Media Studies into the Popular Culture and Freedom, Privacy, & Technology Clusters and Archeology into the Interpreting the Past Cluster. The Media Studies and Archeology Clusters were eliminated through this redesign.

During the Summer Session '10/11 three additional faculty workgroups focused on building coherence and capacity of the Morality; Knowledge, Rationality & Understanding; Women's Studies; Sexualities; Healthy People/Healthy Places; and Community Studies Clusters. The proposals from these workgroups will be presented to the University Studies Council, Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, and Faculty Senate in the Fall of 2011. The University Studies Council will review the proposals in Fall of 2011 for implementation in 2012/13. By Fall of 2012, faculty workgroups will have studied and proposed redesign of current Clusters resulting in around 12 robust and coherent Clusters to be fully implemented in 2013/14.

A component for each Cluster is an ongoing assessment plan which will be integrated into the overall UNST annual assessment to provide both Cluster-specific and UNST-wide data for improvements in course learning objectives as well as faculty development. Since the offering of Jr. Cluster courses is based on shared responsibility for General Education between the UNST Program and Departments, the assessment of Jr. Cluster courses has been a challenge. The assessment plans developed by faculty workgroups and approved for implementation by the UNST Council and Faculty Senate will provide a foundation for future assessment and quality improvement efforts in the 'middle part' of the UNST curriculum (SING and Jr. Cluster courses).

SENIOR CAPSTONE ASSESSMENT

TOOLS AND METHODS:

Summative End-of-Term Course Evaluations Capstone Student Experience Survey: Quantitative

Purpose: The Capstone Student Experience Survey asked about students' experiences in UNST Capstone courses as well as instructor pedagogical approaches and course topics. The survey results provide information to individual faculty about their courses and to the program about the overall student experience in Capstones.

Method: Students enrolled in Capstone courses complete paper-based course evaluations in class at the end of their course. During the 2010-2011 academic year, 2959 students completed surveys.

Capstone Student Experience Survey: Qualitative

Purpose: Each year the Capstone Office analyzes students' written comments from the end-of-term course evaluations in order to learn about the lived experience our students have in Capstone courses. The data is collected to assist individual faculty in improving the teaching and learning in their courses and it allows us to document students' most important learnings as well as their suggestions.

Method: The Capstone Office created a database which randomized all of the students' comments from 2010-2011. two-hundred random comments were selected for analysis from the question regarding the students' most important learnings and 200 random comments were selected representing students' suggestions for improvements. As in previous years, two PSU researchers analyzed the comments separately according to the procedures outlined by Creswell, 1994.

Capstone Course Portfolio Review Portfolio Assessment: Communication

Purpose: Capstone course portfolios were developed as a method to assess student learning at the Senior Capstone level of the University Studies program. In the past, we have assessed common reflection assignments, course-specific reflection assignments and Capstone final products for evidence of student learning in Capstone courses. None of these approaches were able to capture and display the complexity of student learning in a community-based group-focused course. Two years ago we developed course-based portfolios for Capstones which include syllabi, assignment instructions, examples of student work produced in the course, and faculty reflection.

Method: All Capstone instructors were invited to create course portfolios during Winter Term 2011. The group that was coordinating this project chose to focus on the University Studies Communication goal. Capstone instructors were offered a \$250 stipend to provide the materials needed for the portfolios as well as complete a reflection about how they incorporate diversity into their courses. Sixteen course portfolios were constructed for assessment. These represent 49 sections of Capstone during the 2010-2011 academic year, which enrolled 754 students (approximately 25 of the courses and students in the Capstone program during the school year).

To assess the course portfolios a group consisting of the Capstone Director, the Assessment Coordinator, and a Capstone faculty member constructed a framework for evaluating communication in these course portfolios. This framework included a list of the types of learning related to communication that occur in Capstone courses and a scoring guide that included information on scoring portfolios as inadequate, adequate, or exemplary. On the portfolio review day, 4 Capstone faculty members reviewed the 16 portfolios, with each portfolio being scored twice. In addition to an overall rating, reviewers rated each element of the portfolio, gave the program additional information, and identified components that could be used as examples for other faculty.

Pedagogical Catalysts of Civic Competence excerpted from a dissertation summary by Stephanie Stokamer

Purpose: University Studies partnered with a doctoral student who is also a Capstone faculty member providing 5 years' worth of quantitative data used in her dissertation research. The overarching research question guiding the study was: What are the pedagogical catalysts of civic competence in community-based learning courses? Two sub-questions guided this research and drew from student survey data for analysis. In community-based learning courses, (1) What are the student characteristics of civic competence? and (2) Are there identifiable patterns of relationship between elements of pedagogy and development of civic competence?

Method: The data came from the required interdisciplinary community-based learning program at an urban research university. The sample consisted of 10,974 students between 2005-2010, representing about 150 courses a year or approximately 700 sections. The instrument was the course evaluation survey students take to assess the course and report their learning. This survey includes indicators of student learning and of teaching methods, offering the opportunity to both test the proposed model and examine the relationships between pedagogical elements and civic competence outcomes in a way not yet offered through previous research. Item analysis and factor analysis were used to examine the data. The pedagogical elements were correlated with outcomes using cross tabulations and the Pearson Correlation Coefficient, revealing whether there was any association between instructional techniques and students' civic competence.

SENIOR CAPSTONE ASSESSMENT

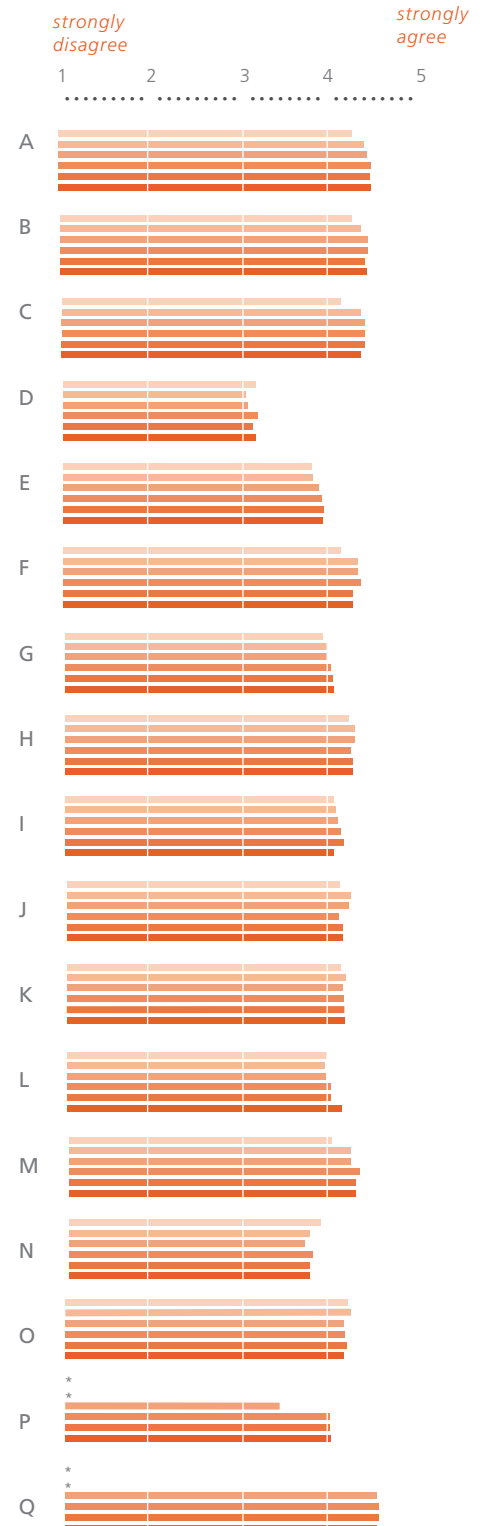
SUMMATIVE END-OF-TERM COURSE EVALUATIONS

2010-2011 CAPSTONE Course Evaluations CAPSTONE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

KEY

YEARS '05-06 '06-07 '07-08 '08-09 '09-10 '10-11

- A The community work I did helped me to better understand the course content in this Capstone.
- B I feel that the community work I did through this course benefited the community.
- C I felt a personal responsibility to meet the needs of the community partner of this course.
- D I was already volunteering in the community before taking this course.
- E I improved my ability to solve problems in this course.
- F My participation in this Capstone helped me to connect what I learned to real life situations.
- G This course enhanced my communication skills (writing, public speaking, etc.).
- H This course helped me understand others who are different from me.
- I This course enhanced my ability to work with others in a team.
- J This course explored issues of diversity (such as race, class, gender, sexual orientation).
- K In this course I improved my ability to analyze views from multiple viewpoints.
- L I will continue to volunteer or participate in the community after this course.
- M The syllabus clearly described how the course content connected to the community work.
- N I believe this course deepened my understanding of local social issues.
- O I now have a better understanding of how to make a difference in my community.
- P I had the opportunity to apply skills and knowledge gained from my major.
- Q I had the opportunity to engage with students from different fields of specialization.



SENIOR CAPSTONE ASSESSMENT

SUMMATIVE END-OF-TERM COURSE EVALUATIONS

2010-2011 CAPSTONE Course Evaluations

CAPSTONE INSTRUCTOR - MEAN SCORES

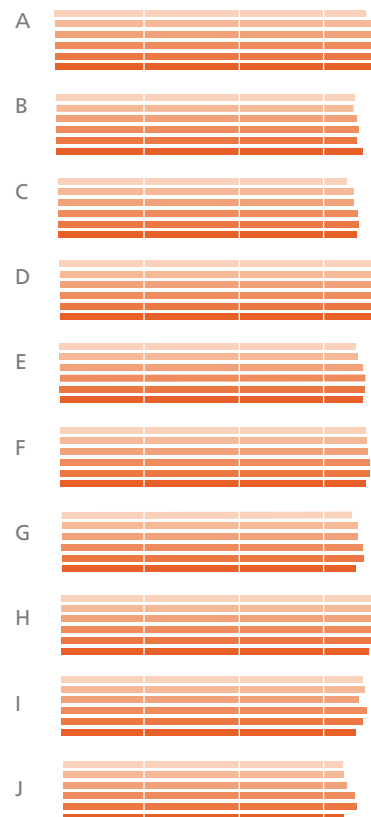
KEY

YEARS '05-06 '06-07 '07-08 '08-09 '09-10 '10-11

- A Showed an personal interest in my learning
- B Scheduled work at an appropriate pace
- C Provided clear instructions for assignments
- D Created an atmosphere that encouraged active participation
- E Presented course material clearly
- F Created an atmosphere that helped me feel personally engaged in my learning
- G Provided helpful feedback
- H Related course material to real-life situations
- I Encouraged interaction outside of class
- J Provided clear grading criteria

strongly disagree strongly agree

1 2 3 4 5



SENIOR CAPSTONE ASSESSMENT

SUMMATIVE END-OF-TERM COURSE EVALUATIONS

KEY

A Reflective journals	G Group decision-making	M Exams
B Required class attendance	H Readings on civic responsibility	N WebCt or Blackboard
C Collaborative projects	I Student presentations	O Portfolio
D Readings on racial and ethnic issues	J Discussions on political issues	P Discussions on ethical issues
E Extensive lecturing	K Discussions on social issues	
F Readings on women and gender issues	L Class discussions	

YEARS '05-06 '06-07 '07-08 '08-09 '09-10 '10-11

2010-2011 CAPSTONE Course Evaluations

COURSE DESIGN QUESTION: Within your Capstone, what forms of learning did the instructor use?

A	76	79.1	75.7	76	67	69.6
B	80.8	80.6	81.5	81	78	80.5
C	82.7	82.4	74.3	83	77	80.8
D	51.7	59.4	53.9	55	53	55.7
E	20.7	18.4	17.3	19	18	18.8
F	34.3	40.8	40.2	41	39	39.5
G	82	80.4	78.6	81	81	81.2
H	61.5	67.8	69.3	74	73	72.9
I	72.6	71.4	73.4	76	72	75.9
J	52.7	55.3	51.8	56	53	55.0
K	77.7	83	83.45	87	88	87.8
L	89.5	88.1	79.2	95	93	94.7
M	3.8	3.0	4.1	5	4	3.6
N	31.4	42.2	58.5	49	52	51.8
O	20	19.5	16.4	18	18	18.7
P	40.4	58.2	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

quantitative

Capstone students continue to agree that their courses emphasize the University Studies goals and help them become aware of and committed to community issues. There were no significant differences between student responses in the '08-'09, '09-'10 academic years and students in the 10-11 academic year.

Students also reported on pedagogical techniques used and course topics covered in Capstone. With few exceptions, the percentage of students reporting the use of particular techniques remained stable or increased. There was a decrease in the use of electronic communication tools.

qualitative - Comments on IMPORTANT LEARNING

From the random sample of 200 comments on the question:

what was your most important learning experience?

Four major themes emerged. Some student responses fell under more than one of the following themes. These are listed in order of rank according to the number of student responses:

1. the community-based learning experience
2. a positive classroom environment and sense of class culture
3. strong teaching strategies
4. raised consciousness and sense of agency

Comments on Areas for COURSE IMPROVEMENT

From the random sample of 200 comments on the question :

what could be improved about the course?

Four major themes emerged. Some student responses fell under more than one of the following themes, which are listed in order of importance to students:

1. relationships with a community partner
2. a positive classroom environment and sense of class culture
3. strong teaching strategies
4. raised consciousness and sense of agency

SENIOR CAPSTONE ASSESSMENT

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

CAPSTONE COURSE PORTFOLIO REVIEW

portfolio ratings

INADEQUATE: the portfolio did not show that the course provided students with clear opportunities to demonstrate their learning related to ethics and social responsibility - **3 PORTFOLIOS**

ADEQUATE: the portfolio showed that the course provided opportunities for students to demonstrate their learning related to ethics and social responsibility - **10 PORTFOLIOS**

EXEMPLARY: the course syllabi, assignments, and activities consistently and clearly provided opportunities for students to demonstrate learning related to ethics and social responsibility; this course is an example for others - **2 PORTFOLIOS**

portfolio element

syllabus - **2 exemplary**

assignment instructions - **1 exemplary**

student work samples - **2 exemplary**

faculty reflection - **4 exemplary**

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The course portfolios demonstrated that by and large students are given opportunities to engage in and demonstrate learning related to communication. Twelve out of 15 courses were assessed as adequately meeting expectations for addressing ethics & social responsibility or as exemplary courses, incorporating many aspects of communication throughout the course.

For courses that were judged to be exemplary, student work samples and assignment instructions were specifically influential. Students in these courses were asked to engage in multiple forms of communication and given opportunities to process their growth as communicators. The faculty reflection clearly discussed how the examples of assignment instructions and student work samples supported student learning related to communication.

For courses that were assessed as inadequate, the materials compiled in the portfolio did not clearly reflect the type of learning opportunities that were defined. Communication is clearly present in all courses, but students were not always directed to intentionally practice communication skills and then identify and reflect on those skills. These courses tended to provide opportunities for only one or two types of learning related to communication and did not clearly demonstrate that communication was addressed as a goal in the course. For example, there were many courses where students engaged in group work, but not all were asked to think about their roles in groups and how the group was communicating. We want to emphasize that while Capstone courses should incorporate all four UNST goals, it is difficult to focus on all of the goals equally in one course. The courses that did not provide adequate learning opportunities related to communication likely focused more heavily on other UNST goals.

Pedagogical Catalysts of Civic Competence

Student Characteristics of Civic Competence.

Results indicated that the epistemological conceptualization of civic competence was sound as proposed but strengthened further with slight revision, such as realigning items and simplifying constructs. The 14 outcome items held together conceptually as a representation of civic competence ($r = .917$) and for the individual components (e.g. $r = .848$ for skills) and domains (e.g. $r = .753$ for civic knowledge). Cronbach's alpha never fell below $r = .500$, indicating moderately strong relationships among the items, but the results also ranged from $r = .592$ for efficacy to $r = .848$ for skills. It is unclear from these procedures alone whether these same constructs would emerge when not "forced" upon an existing instrument or whether any other combinations of items could contribute to the theoretical foundation of the model.

Principal component analysis was thus used to determine how the items group together without the researcher's imposed constructs, following procedures for best interpretability (Green, Salkind, & Akey, 2000; Field, 2009). This approach retained four factors that offered strong confirmation of the proposed epistemology of civic competence, although slight variations in how items combined further informed the model (see Figure 3). For example, attitudes ($r = .707$) and actions ($r = .506$) emerged as more salient and appropriate labels for what had been termed dispositions ($r = .593$) and identity ($r = .652$), and efficacy was redistributed throughout all of the concepts. Another item analysis of the newly grouped items further supported the shift and led to generally higher Cronbach's alphas.

Patterns of Relationship between Community-Based Learning Pedagogy and Civic Competence.

Correlations were run between the instructional items and each of the four components, each of the domains, and the overall construct of civic competence using new outcome variables computed from mean scores. The pedagogical practices with the strongest relationships to civic competence are (1) exploration of diversity ($r = .552$), (2) a syllabus that clearly connects service work to course content ($r = .569$), and (3) activities that engage students in their learning ($r = .539$). The results showed both effective faculty strategies (e.g. 80% of those attaining knowledge outcomes indicated that their instructors used class discussion) as well as what might enhance outcomes if utilized more frequently (e.g. topics of race or political issues, used by only half of faculty but associated with civic competence).

These results strongly substantiated the pedagogical ring of the model, with the pedagogical catalysts most strongly and consistently associated with civic competence exemplifying the proposed pedagogical elements of course design (exploring diversity, $r = .552$), teaching strategies (engaging activities, $r = .539$), and integration of service (clearly connected in the syllabus, $r = .569$). Most importantly, the exploration of diversity significantly enhances all civic competence outcomes, reinforcing the connection between competent participation in a pluralistic democracy and community-based learning for social justice, and suggesting alignment between critical pedagogy and this model. Thus this new conceptualization has been deemed the Critical Pedagogy Model of Civic Competence.

SENIOR CAPSTONE ASSESSMENT

REFLECTION

Capstone Student Experience Survey: Quantitative

Capstone end-of-term course evaluations this year remained relatively stable. The Capstone Office works throughout the year with faculty in individual sessions, small group brown bags, and larger retreats to maintain a high degree of consistency in the program. One experienced Capstone faculty member worked directly with a handful of faculty whose courses had low scores in the previous year in order to help enhance the quality of the student learning experience. Through our rigorous Capstone review process and faculty development efforts, including a standardized 1:1 Capstone faculty orientation done by CAE, we are able to maintain high quality course offerings.

The one area of concern within the data set is the slight drop in students' evaluation of the instruction of the course, especially in the areas of pacing of the material, clear instruction on assignments, and clear grading criteria. In this section the course evaluations still showed overall that students were satisfied with these components in most courses, but a closer look at the data revealed that 7 courses scored 3.8 or lower on these items. Out of the 7 courses 2 were taught by faculty with historically high scores, one was taught by someone not returning to teach, and 4 were courses that we plan to offer again next year. The logical next step is to have our faculty development coordinators follow up 1:1 with the 4 faculty who taught courses with low instructor scores. In this way we can target our response to improve future student experiences in these courses. If the scores for these courses do not show improvement it is recommended that these courses be co-taught in the future so that these faculty get 1:1 mentoring from a seasoned Capstone instructor.

Capstone Student Experience Survey: Qualitative

It is first important to note that nearly half of the 200 respondents commented that they were satisfied with their Capstone classes and did not see areas for course improvement. Among those commenting on areas for course improvement, the greatest concentration of comments was on improvements to the relationship with the community partner. In general, many students were concerned with bettering communication among the community partner, instructor, and students. One student said, "The parameters were not clear as to what we were there to do." Another noted that they could have used "more organization at the service sites...I feel they weren't prepared, and the expectations weren't clear to us or them."

The second largest issue commented on by respondents was course management. Students were concerned with receiving clearer assignment guidelines, needing more instructor feedback on coursework, behavior management, and student accountability. Comments reflected a desire for "clearer defined expectations," "delegation of projects," and enforcement of attendance because "it's hard to teach a course on community involvement

and civic affairs when half the students don't show up on time." Other students requested "more group building" and "more clearly defined roles" in group work in addition to "better feedback on assignments."

Comments on course length revealed that some students would like a longer-term community-based learning experience in order to develop a more meaningful relationship with the community partner site and a more in-depth final project. As one stated, "One term is not enough" and "I wish this class could have lasted all year."

As always, a few students mentioned a wish for better classrooms that would facilitate the group learning experience in a setting more conducive to small group discussions.

Recommendations

Capstone students are clearly engaging in positive learning in the areas of direct and indirect community-based learning and are learning within environments that promote strong class culture. In addition, students experience effective teaching strategies and leave Capstone courses feeling empowered to act on their newly acquired knowledge and sense of civic engagement. This reveals that students do respond well to experiential learning situations. It also indicates that instructors, community partners, and Capstone peers are working together well to facilitate learning in these areas.

The Capstone Office can draw upon these positive experiences when analyzing and addressing areas for Capstone course improvement. While many Capstone students were satisfied with their courses, the themes of the community partner relationship, course management, course length, and facilities are areas that can be looked at and strengthened. Within these 4 themes, the issues of communication with the community partner throughout the community partnership and course management of in-class time, assigned work, feedback, and group logistics appear to be the two greatest areas for continued training for Capstone instructors, who can also facilitate additional training and communication with community partner organizations. This data can be used to work with faculty through Brown Bag forums, retreats, and 1:1 to address course-specific concerns.

SENIOR CAPSTONE ASSESSMENT

REFLECTION

Capstone Course Portfolios

COURSE PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT PROCESS

We followed the same procedure that we developed last year, offering an overall score for the course portfolio in addition to scores for the portfolio components. As we reviewed the portfolios, the reviewers had some suggestions to make the review process more productive. In particular, they suggested that the instructions given to faculty for their reflection ask faculty to be more explicit in identifying the specific skills they emphasize in the course and then providing evidence of that through connections with the syllabus, assignment instructions, and student work. The reviewers wanted to see a clearer link between the course activities and the student learning as articulated by the faculty member.

COMMUNICATION LEARNING GOAL

Overall, the course portfolio process revealed that students generally have opportunities to meet our communication learning outcomes as stated. However, the goal of communication was much more challenging to evaluate through Capstone course portfolios than the goals of Diversity and Ethics and Social Responsibility, which we reviewed in the last 2 years. One reviewer framed it as a problem of presence versus richness. Because communication is required to accomplish the tasks of a Capstone course, the presence of communication was easily discernable. It was clear that communication was happening in the courses; students gave presentations, worked in groups, turned in written assignments, and produced materials (e.g., grants, web sites, etc.) for use by community partners. It was less easy to discern the mechanisms used to enhance these skills in students or to encourage students to examine their communication skills in the context of the course. Students described the kinds of communication they used in the Capstone course, but not whether or how the course had enhanced those skills. Reviewers wanted to see that students could articulate how they were communicating in new and complicated ways, that the course moved students to a new depth of communication, or that the course helped students develop skills they would use elsewhere. In the courses that were rated exemplary, there were clear opportunities for students to practice a communication skill (e.g., interviewing), reflect on that practice, identify areas for improvement, and then reflect overall on the specific skills they honed during the course. Because the overall evidence was not as rich as was expected, it may make sense to revisit the communication learning goals as currently articulated, focusing on clearly explaining the expectation for meta-cognitive opportunities and the identification of and reflection on communication skills. The courses rated as exemplary can provide models for others.

Pedagogical Catalysts of Civic Competence

Diversity is essential to the development of civic competence, supporting pluralistic democracy and community-based learning for social justice.

This finding suggests that diversity of thought and experience should be creatively woven into all types of community-based learning to enhance civic competence. This result also supports practices such as international service-learning to develop global citizenship competence (Battistoni, Longo, & Jayanandhan, 2009). Moreover, critical pedagogy is necessary to most deeply and effectively help students understand community-based learning in the broader spectrum of civic participation for social change, to create space for dialogue around issues of privilege and difference, and to challenge systems of oppression (Kitano, 1997; Souza, 2007; Yep, 2011).

Service should be thoroughly integrated into a course through the syllabus and community partnership in order to maximize civic competence. For over 10 years scholars have maintained that in order to maximize benefits and make genuine contributions to community, service-learning must be well integrated into course work (Cress, 2011; Hatcher, Bringle, & Muthia, 2004; Eyler, 2002; Howard, 2001). This study offered a practical rubric for revising syllabi to most effectively catalyze civic competence adapted from Kitano's (1997) concepts of Exclusive, Inclusive, and Transformed syllabi for multiculturalism. The Stokamer Taxonomy of Course and Syllabus Change for Civic Competence could be invaluable for faculty professional development workshops, program assessment, or individual review of course syllabi, and it could also be adjusted for co-curricular programming.

Overall Reflection

In summary, the data collected this year reflects the consistency of the high quality of teaching and learning that takes place in Capstone courses, especially in the arena of the University Studies goals. Capstone students continued to report deepened critical thinking skills, enhanced communication skills, furthered appreciation for human diversity, and a commitment to social responsibility. The Capstone Office is committed to improving Capstone courses, especially the handful of courses where students disagreed that faculty provided clear grading criteria and neglected to provide meaningful feedback on student work. Next year, the Capstone office will work with data gathered from our Camp Kiwanis partnership to distill the most significant learning experiences graduates report having in their careers at Portland State. Researchers will explore the relationship between Capstone course experiences and those reported significant learning experiences in order to further our understanding in the field of best practices in education.

MENTOR PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

TOOLS AND METHODS

FRINQ End-of-Year Survey

Purpose: The FRINQ End-of-Year Survey asked students to rate their experiences in their FRINQ course over the 2010-2011 academic year. Students responded to questions about the course format, faculty pedagogical practices, and mentor contribution to the course. The survey also asked about experiences with advising, comfort on campus, and plans for the fall term. The results provide information to individual faculty about their courses and to the program about students' overall experience in FRINQ. Students were also asked about their experiences assembling and constructing their ePortfolio.

Method: During the final 3 weeks of Spring Term 2011, FRINQ students completed the End-of-Year Survey. This online survey was administered during mentor sessions. 924 students responded to the survey for a response rate of 70%.

KEY

- A Displayed a personal interest in students and their learning
- B Made it clear how mentor session work fits into the course
- C Related course material to real life situations
- D Inspired students to set and achieve goals which really challenged them
- E Asked students to share ideas and experiences with others whose backgrounds and viewpoints differ from their own
- F Encouraged interaction outside of class (phone calls; e-mail; etc.)
- G Provided opportunities to help students complete assignments successfully
- H Help students feel more comfortable at PSU
- I Helped students improve their academic skills
- J The mentor sessions connected well with the class.

YEARS ■ '06-07 ■ '07-08 ■ '08-09 ■ '09-10 ■ '10-11

MA = MODERATE AGREEMENT HA = HIGH AGREEMENT

Percentage of courses where students agreed that the mentor...

	<div><div></div></div> MA * HA		<div><div></div></div> MA * HA		<div><div></div></div> MA * HA		<div><div></div></div> MA * HA		<div><div></div></div> MA * HA	
A	12.5	87.5	8.1	89.2	7	93	2	98	4.7	95.3
B	31.3	62.5	13.5	83.8	16.3	81.4	14.3	89.8	16.3	83.7
C	18.8	65.6	18.9	78.4	23.3	74.4	16.3	87.8	20.9	76.7
D	37.5	43.8	37.8	62.2	30.2	67.4	26.5	73.5	25.6	72.1
E	12.5	84.4	8.1	89.2	14	86	8.2	91.8	4.7	95.3
F	31.3	50	40.5	59.5	39.5	60.5	12.2	87.8	18.6	79.1
G	18.8	81.3	8.1	89.2	9.3	90.7	6.1	93.9	2.3	97.7
H	12.5	87.5	16.2	81.1	11.6	88.4	14.3	87.8	9.3	90.7
I	28.1	59.4	24.3	73	25.6	72.1	18.4	83.7	11.6	88.4
J	34.4	46.9	37.8	56.8	34.9	60.5	26.5	71.4	34.9	65.1

*In courses with high agreement 75-100% of students agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. Moderate agreement represents 50-74% of students and low agreement indicates that less than half of students agreed with the statement.

MENTOR PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

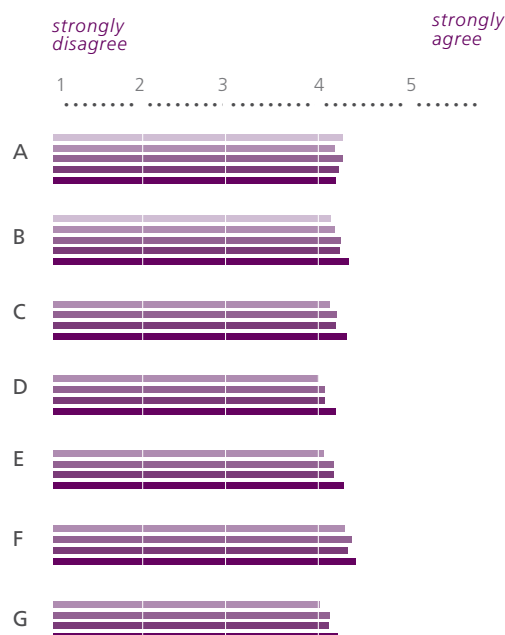
KEY

- A** Displayed a personal interest in students and their learning
- B** Provided opportunities to help me complete assignments successfully
- C** Clearly stated expectations of students in mentor session
- D** Helped me understand the resources available to me at PSU
- E** Clearly stated the learning objectives for the mentor session
- F** Created an atmosphere that encouraged active student participation
- G** Used activities and assignments that allowed me to feel personally engaged in my learning

YEARS '06-07 '07-08 '08-09 '09-10 '10-11

MA = MODERATE AGREEMENT HA = HIGH AGREEMENT

The mean responses for SINQ mentor course end-of-year surveys.



TOOLS AND METHODS

SINQ End-of-Year Survey

Purpose: The SINQ End-of-term Survey asked students to rate their experiences in their SINQ course. Students responded to questions about the course format, faculty pedagogical practices, and mentor contribution to the course. The results provide information to individual faculty about their course and to the program about students' overall experience in SINQ.

Method: During the final 3 weeks of each term during the 2010-2011 academic year, SINQ students completed the End-of-Term Survey. This online survey was administered during mentor sessions. 3542 students responded to the survey.

Percentage of SINQ courses where students agreed that the mentor...

	MA		HA		MA		HA		MA		HA	
	9.7	89.2	19.4	79.1	13.8	85.4	16	79.7	12	84.7		
A												
B	22.6	75.3	20.2	78.3	14.6	84.6	13.2	86	9.3	88		
C	NA	NA	31.8	65.9	20.8	76.9	23.7	70.6	10.7	85.9		
D	NA	NA	36.4	55.8	36.2	60	13.9	83.9	24	72.7		
E	NA	NA	34.1	62.8	17.7	80	19.5	75.5	14.1	83.2		
F	NA	NA	14.7	83.7	9.2	89.2	29.2	64.3	7.3	90		
G	NA	NA	36.4	58.9	25.4	70.8	36.3	58.7	19.3	77.3		

*In courses with high agreement 75-100% of students agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. Moderate agreement represents 50-74% of students and low agreement indicates that less than half of students agreed with the statement.

MENTOR PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

FRINQ Mentors

The data for student ratings for FRINQ mentors reveals some areas of consistently strong or increasingly higher means and student agreement from years '06-07 through '10-11 years, including display of personal interest in students, providing opportunities to help students, asking students to share ideas and experiences with others across differences, and helping students feel more comfortable.

Areas remaining steady and relatively strong for means and agreement over these years include relating course materials to real-life situations, inspiring students to achieve goals and challenging them, and encouraging interaction outside of class.

Areas where the data shows a declining or steadily lower trend in student means and agreement are related to the connections of mentor session to main class.

SINQ Mentors

The data for student ratings for SINQ mentors reveals that a majority of these areas show consistently strong or increasingly higher means and student agreement from years '06-07 through '10-11 years.

Areas remaining steady and relatively strong (though could use improvement to be higher) for means and agreement over these years include helping students understand resources available at PSU.

There were no areas where the data shows a declining or steadily lower trend in student means and agreement.

REFLECTION

Regarding the FRINQ trends for areas of improvement, mentor training can be improved to address the mentor communication and lesson planning to increase the overt connections of the materials to main session. The Mentor Director will also discuss the data with the FRINQ Coordinator for improving faculty awareness of this from their side of curricular planning. It is not clear from the data why the connections are not clear to the students, so more attention will be placed in mentor training on the importance of communicating connections explicitly and planning sessions that connect to and enhance course content.

Additionally, FRINQ mentor training can be strengthened to address the steady or moderately increasing trends, such as relating materials to real-life experience and inspiring students to set goals and challenge themselves. One way we will address the goal-setting issue is by asking mentors to set their own goals using their ePortfolios throughout the year and to create steps and reflections on these each term.

Regarding SINQ trends, GR mentors will be further exposed to PSU resources in mentor training in Spring and Fall to increase their abilities to help students understand resources. It may be that they either are not as familiar with the resources UGs use (being GR mentors or being new to PSU as many GR mentors typically are), or it may also be that SINQs focus less in general on student support via resources and more on direct support of actual goals such as improving writing. SINQ mentor sessions also meet less regularly than FRINQs, so it could be that mentors and faculty make other choices for focusing those topics. However, it is easy to enhance mentor training to improve the capacity of SINQ mentors to support students at the level of resource connections at PSU for their development as students both academically and socially.

A final observation is that all FRINQ and SINQ mentors should receive a copy of the questions that students will be asked to respond to related to their mentor sessions. This should be offered early and overtly in training and reemphasized in Fall training with a focus on using evaluation data to improve mentoring.

Research Goals for '11-12 Year in Mentor Program

For '11-12, the Mentor Program will focus its research efforts on the analysis of online SINQ data, addition or improvement of the questions we ask students about their online experiences with mentors, comparisons of online SINQ mentoring to regular SINQs, and using the data to find evidence for improving training and best practices for online mentoring.

Additionally, the Mentor Program will examine retention and achievement data that is available for past and current mentor cohorts. In particular, we will explore the rates of graduation and retention for peer mentors in comparison to sample groups of PSU students who are not mentors. We will also assess any GPA comparisons we can make to non-mentor PSU cohort students.

RETENTION EFFORTS

As part of the campus-wide effort to increase retention and improve student experience, This year University Studies continued a number of initiatives focused on student success. Below are some of the specific initiatives led by UNST or initiatives in which the program participated.

In the summer of 2010, PSU purchased the CRM Talisma, enrollment management and retention software, with the goal to improve communication with students and build relationships with prospective and admitted students throughout their academic career. The University Studies' Retention Associate was a member of the core implementation team for CRM. The implementation of the CRM was a year-long institution-wide effort to build a system that will help students overcome barriers to success, enable better student connection to resources on campus, and improve student retention and overall success. The UNST participation and input was guided by the assessment findings collected during the last few years. These findings informed the implementation of a number of CRM functions and will serve as a basis for intervention strategies implemented through CRM.

Our plan for next year is to continue implementation of the CRM as a systematic way to address issues affecting student success and retention. This includes refining the FRINQ communication plan, which is based on academic calendar and the needs students have at a particular point in time during their first year. The CRM gives us an ability to enhance our support by providing targeted communication to students based on their identified needs. We also plan to use a notion of risk factors, which will be developed through CRM for the purposes of early identification of students at risk and provide intervention based on identified risks. Other projects designed to increase the usability of the CRM as a retention tool are expected to emerge as the use of CRM is increased.

While student attrition happens throughout the academic year, of note is that about 15-20% students complete their freshmen year and do not return the following fall. In addition, of the students who identify themselves through the FRINQ End-of-Year Survey as not planning to return the following fall, more than 80% do not come back. In an effort to address these findings, University Studies led the planning and implementation of the Fall Registration Project this year. The purpose of this project is

to increase freshmen students' registration for the following fall. More specifically, the project steps are to identify freshmen students who are at risk of not returning for their second year and to provide intervention, helping students to stay at PSU and complete their education. This includes campus-wide coordination of efforts and involvement of individuals and services across the campus with the goal to create a referral system suitable for quick and effective intervention for students at risk of not returning to PSU. The success of the project is being evaluated on an ongoing basis with the final assessment to be done after the 4th week of the Fall term. While this project is focused on providing intervention to students during Spring and Summer Term, its potential for use throughout the year will be considered as well.

University Studies received an AmeriCorps grant to hire a Mentor Program Retention Coordinator to support PSU and UNST's retention efforts. The AmeriCorps Retention Coordinator will be working with undergraduate peer mentors in University Studies on strategies to identify students at risk of leaving as well as on interventions to help these students stay in school. The goal of this project is to reduce a number of freshmen students who drop out of college during or after their first year. The AmeriCorps member will work with the Retention Associate, Assessment Associate and Mentor Director to ensure that specific projects are consistent with retention initiatives, are assessed on an ongoing basis, and meet stated outcomes.

